

Chairman's Summary - Representative Bert Stevenson
Mountain Home Working Group
November 10, 2004

At its November meeting, the Mountain Home Working Group presented its draft final report for review and public comment. The working group also received an update on the Polymer (PAM) Project and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

Mountain Home Working Group Draft Final Report: The committee reviewed its draft working group report section by section, accepting input from those members of the public in attendance. Some of the discussion centered around the role of prior appropriation doctrine, potential changes to domestic water policy, and the need to spread costs of the PAM project equitably among all water users who benefit. An edited version of the draft will be posted on Idaho Department of Water Resource's website and distributed to members of the Mountain Home Ground Water Advisory Committee prior to their meeting later in the month. The final report will be adopted at the working group's December 6th meeting.

PAM: In its second year, the irrigation district gained 1,404 acre-feet (AF), a good return on its \$900 investment for materials. The district intends to continue the program whether the University of Idaho cost-shares or not, but will experiment with different applications. If the experiment continues to be successful, the district may be able to deliver the same amount of water longer over the season.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP): This water conservation program is not a final solution to aquifer problems in Mountain Home or on the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, but rather a delaying tactic while a better solution is identified. In Elmore County, up to an estimated 18,000 acres may be eligible for CREP enrollment. The city of Mountain Home or other entities may be interested in purchasing some of the water rights enrolled in CREP after the program ends.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 6, 2004, at 9:30 a.m. in the Mountain Home City Hall Meeting Room.